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Chief of Field Artillery

Force Modernization… It isn't Just for Heavy Forces Anymore

The United States Army must be ever mindful of changes occurring almost daily in the geostrategic environment and ready to respond with full-spectrum dominance anywhere in the world at a moment's notice. The Field Artillery, guided by the experience of our lightfighting Redlegs, utilizing cutting-edge technology and cognizant of the vision set forth by our Army leaders, has several force modernization programs for our light forces. These units must be ready to respond quickly to shifts in world situations and accomplish any military operation from peace enforcement to humanitarian assistance to war.

Our highly trained light units—the 82d Airborne Division, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), 25th Infantry Division (Light), 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment (Light), the Lion Brigade of the Southern European Task Force (SETAF), our Army National Guard's 29th Infantry Division (Light) and separate infantry brigades—bring unique capabilities to the warfighting arena. The Field Artillerymen of these units must have capabilities as strategically deployable and tactically mobile as the soldiers they support with fires effects. We are at a juncture where the Army is turning additional emphasis on light force modernization, emphasis that will give our light forces the firepower they need for success in all light scenarios for decades to come.

Pathfinders for the Future. Our guidance for light force modernization comes from a variety of sources, but most importantly, it comes from the lightfighter soldiers and leaders who will be using this equipment in combat. Everyone from Lieutenant General William F. Kernan, the Commander of XVIII Airborne Corps, and Brigadier General Larry D. Gottardi, the Commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps Artillery, to the young soldiers throughout our light community have helped identify force requirements. This continued exchange of information is crucial in developing capabilities that will meet light force needs in future operations.

Fires platforms and munitions for light forces are also influenced by exercises and warfighting experiments that examine the efficiency of current and projected weapons and tactics in realistic, demanding environments. The Joint Contingency Force (JCF) Army Warfighting Experiment (AWE), Urban Warrior, and the Military Operations in Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) Advanced Concepts Technology Demonstration (ACTD) are all scheduled for 2000. Such experimentations may create fires requirements that are challenging for the Field Artillery, but the initiatives we have on-going are flexible enough to meet those challenges.

We anticipate that any new developments geared for lightfighting will have at least these characteristics: incorporation of digital architecture for total situational understanding; exploitation of leap-ahead technologies, both off-the-shelf and of military design; the ability to gain and maintain information dominance; a focus on asymmetrical operations by hitting the enemy with capabilities for which he has no defense while protecting our forces from his capabilities; and above all, delivery of the right mix of effects that fulfills the commander's intent, regardless of the effects' origins.

Weapons Platforms, Munitions and Effects. There is much activity in improving our current fleet of towed howitzers and designing a new direct support weapon system relevant to military operations beyond 2010. These improvements are as simple as adding a bogey wheel to the trails of our M198 howitzers to ease aircraft loading and adding lifting handles to the trails of our M119s to help our soldiers manhandle their guns on the firing point…and they are as complex as designing the advanced technology light artillery system (ATLAS). Simple or complex, they are all intended to give our light forces the best firing platforms in the world.

The high-mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) capable of firing the entire multiple-launch rocket system family of munitions (MFOM), including the Army tactical missile system (ATACMS), will benefit from existing programs designed to improve MFOM range, accuracy and lethality.

Other effects the light community seeks are infrared illumination, red smoke and antipersonnel and antiarmor capabilities. In many circumstances, these munitions will give our lightfighters distinct warfighting advantages in future conflicts.

Leaping Ahead…With Caution. As Lieutenant General John A. Dubia, the Director of the Army Staff and a former Chief of the Field Artillery, has pointed out, the Field Artillery must adhere to three overarching principles as we bring our lightfighters to the same level of modernization as the mechanized forces. First, we must ensure that all systems we field will enable our forces to achieve the visions outlined by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and our Army leaders. Second, we must not fall into the trap of modernizing legacy weapon systems whose capabilities and effects may be irrelevant to our 21st century mission. There comes a point in the life cycle of all weapons systems when *tried-and-true* becomes *tired-and-through*. And third, we must design all weapons platforms, munitions, and command and control devices to function fully in joint and combined operations.

With these principles in mind and with our lightfighting Redlegs overwatching our course, our modernization program will guarantee decisive victory and overwhelming success on future battlefields and all other operations well into the next century.